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The Story of AUSTINMER

by

NORMAN S. KING

Published in conjunction with
THE CENTENARY OF AUSTINMER PUBLIC SCHOOL
1867 - 1967

"Sidmouth", the old colonial style house standing back with verandah posts, was built by R. M. Westmacott in 1837. The school was built in 1891. The large house next to it has been purchased by the Dept. of Education. It was built in 1905.

The beach during carnival time at Austinmer.

The Story of AUSTINMER

INCORPORATING

THE CENTENARY OF AUSTINMER PUBLIC SCHOOL 1867 - 1967

BY

NORMAN S. KING

PAST-PRESIDENT
ILLAWARRA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Author of:

"History of Austinmer"
"Robert Marsh Westmacott in Illawarra"
"Cornelius O'Brien, Pioneer of Bulli"

Papers:

"Australia's First Solicitor"
"Australia's First Farmer"

THE STORY OF AUSTINMER

by

Norman S. King, J.P.

EARLY DAYS OF DISCOVERY.

It was a bright April day in the year of 1770 and a light north-easterly breeze, coming in off the sea, was filling the sails of the barque "ENDEAVOUR" moving her slowly north along the coast of a new land which, those on board, had discovered eight days earlier on the 20th of that month and which no white man had ever looked upon before.

She was a trim ship of 370 tons commanded by Captain James Cook who had travelling with him Sir Joseph Banks, Botanist and Fellow of the Royal Society, and Dr. Solander, Naturalist from the British Museum, together with a crew of 41 seamen, 12 marines, 38 officers and scientists, in all numbering 94 persons.

The scientists were a party of astronomers and meteorologists, journeying with Cook on a voyage to the Island of Tahiti, in the Pacific Ocean for the purpose of "Observing the transit of Venus across the face of the Sun" early in the year of 1769.

His task accomplished, Cook had been ordered to proceed west in order to establish the existence or otherwise, of an unknown land much spoken of as "TERRA INCOGNITO". He located the Islands of New Zealand, chartered them and took them in the name of George III of England, then sailed west-north-west eventually coming in contact with the east coast of Australia, which he named New South Wales.

On the particular day mentioned above, the conversation on board simmered with excitement; an attempt to land was to be made. Fires on the land had been seen the night before and, in the morning natives had been seen on shore, moving about with canoes on the sand.

The sandy shore extended for miles along the coast and the land was flat extending to mountains in the background. The natives knew the area as "Allowrie", the habitat of the 'Turawal' Tribe, who for the past two days had discussed the appearance of the "Winged Monster" as she lay becalmed and at the mercy of the currents within sight of them all. Messengers had been hastened north several beaches to the 'Thirroul' tribe and all were on the look-out for it.

In the afternoon, a small winged boat left the "Monster" and made for the shore. The ship's yawl had been lowered and Captain Cook, Joseph Banks, Dr. Solander and Tupia, a Tahitian native, to be used as an interpreter and seaman, sailed towards the shore. The natives, hidden in the scrub bordering the beach, began calling out to each other, Woll-on-gong; Woll-on-gong; meaning "Here comes the monster"; but the surf was great and, fearing the capsize of the craft, Cook abandoned the attempt, returned to the ship and sailed north. When the natives realised they were not coming ashore, and were leaving, word was flashed to the Thirroul beach natives who in turn sent word to their tribesmen at the beach north, which we know as Austinmer, that the "Monster" was coming towards them.

The morning had passed and the sun was well past being above when a shout came from the headland, Woll-on-gong! Woll-on-gong! as the white sails and hull came into view. As she slowly sailed past and was gone, for many of them it was to be the first and last time such an event was to take place. Thus the first white men saw and never mentioned, the small, but now so popular, beach.

THE COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

It is possible that 18 years afterwards, in 1788, many of the natives who had shouted Woll-on-gong on seeing the "ENDEAVOUR" may have seen some of the ships of the First Fleet as they sailed up the coast to Botany Bay. Then, eight years later, in 1796, an event took place that must have aroused the interest of the natives. It was when Surgeon George Bass and Midshipman Matthew Flinders, and the boy William Martin, were being swept by coastal currents past the beach to the area of the Five Islands and Lake Illawarra; then three days later, the three men landed on North Austinmer beach to stretch their aching limbs and get some much needed sleep, after being cramped up for two nights in their tiny boat.

As I sit on my front verandah writing, I look directly down on to the beach and remind myself that it is just like it was when those three intrepid adventurers landed on it, the waves dashing on the self same rocks in the self same way, racing up the beach as they did 170 years ago and no doubt for millions of years before.

Three weary and twice wrecked survivors from a wrecked ship in Bass Strait — all that were left of a party of 17 who had set out to walk to Sydney from the Cape Howe region, were, in the year 1797, the next whites to traverse the area, only this time on land. William Clarke, super-cargo of the wrecked "Sydney Cove", and

two other seamen, reached Coalclif, there to discover coal on the surface and to actually make a fire for the night with it. This proved to be the first discovery in the colony.

Following Clarke's discovery, the only activity in the Bulli area (and Bulli or "Boulie" extended from Stanwell Park to Mt. Keira) was the cutting of cedar which abounded on the mountain slopes, and it was possibly 20 years before whites were again seen at North Bulli. The natives by this time would be quite used to seeing whites in the area, for cedar getters were operating as early as 1805 nearer Wollongong and where it could be shipped away.

THE FIRST SETTLERS

In 1815, the first cattle were driven over land and mountain from near Liverpool to what was known as the Five Islands District surrounding Lake Illawarra. These cattle must have been brought down between Bulli and Brokers Nose mountain as the cliffs at North Bulli would have been too precipitous. However, a track down the cliffs was discovered at Wombarra. Denmark Street leads up to it. Surveyor, James Meehan, describes it in his field book 119, giving measurements from the descent to Wollongong. An Irish immigrant named Cornelius O'Brien,* who migrated to the Appin District in 1815, obtained a grant of 300 acres in 1821 where Bulli is now established and, by that time, tracks were probably leading to the beaches north of his holding. Although his house was called the "Sentinel of the North", one can easily visualise picnic parties travelling along the track leading to the delightful glen and beach of North Bulli. Of course, Wollongong was not in existence then, but considerable land had been taken up and agricultural pursuits were being carried on. O'Brien himself cultivated 90 acres and depastured cattle.

*"Cornelius O'Brien, Pioneer of Bulli", by N. S. King
Published by the Illawarra Historical Society

AUSTINMER'S FIRST SETTLER

As the years sped by, more settlers came to take up land and start cultivating and raising cattle. Shipyards were built, a whaling station established, flour mills and cedar-getting gave employment to many. Vast areas weer granted to eminent people, so that a class of landlords sprang up, employing convicts forced on them by the government, sometimes in considerable numbers, for which provision had to be made for housing and maintenance. Treatment was sometimes harsh. Chained up at night and often beaten, the convict was looked upon as a very low

specimen of humanity and had to bow and doff his hat or cap when he came into the presence of his master.

And so, by the early thirties, the population had grown to such an extent that the settlement near the tiny harbour was laid out and officially named Wollongong. Also at this time Governor Bourke paid a visit to the area accompanied by his Aide-de-Camp, Captain Robert Marsh Westmacott. He, Westmacott, was so impressed with the vast holdings of these gentry and the lordly manner they exhibited, that he thought he wanted to have a part in it all, so, when he returned to Sydney, he resigned his official positions and applied for a grant of land in the Illawarra to become a settler.

He made the acquaintance of Cornelius O'Brien and journeyed to his property to discuss the purchase of three properties held by him and at the same time obtain his opinion of land to the north for the purpose of cultivation. Probably they visited the area and agreed that it was suitable, for Westmacott applied for and was granted 300 acres where Austinmer ultimately became established.

This was in 1836 and by the next year he had constructed a commodious house which he named "Sidmouth" after the town in Devon, England, where he was born. The grant extended from the lane behind Moore Street on the south to Maxwell Road from the sea to the cliffs. The deeds of all the properties in that area bear the name of R. M. Westmacott as the grantee of the land. That area was known as "Sidmouth" for many years.

In the "HISTORY OF AUSTINMER" by N. S. King, the life and activities of R. M. Westmacott are fully described, but he had such a bearing on the development of the Wollongong area that it will be interesting to note some of his activities.

He was delighted with his grant, the terrain, its suitability for cultivation, its plenteous water supply, its foreshores of sandy beaches, its gentle slopes and stretches of level areas, and its arcadian glens and idyllic water courses. To this man of artistic tastes and high social standing, it was a Bohemian Paradise .

He selected a level site in the glen where the creek ran down to the beach, for the site of his house, where it stood for nearly 90 years, being demolished in the 1920s and replaced by the presen t house built by Captain Young who named it "Rathmines". The cedar, so freely used in the old house and which was so readily at hand when it was built, was used to a certain extent in the new one; but most of it was used to build a house in Asquith Street for the captain's old batman, Tommy Rooney.

By the middle of 1837, he was able to bring his wife and two sons to the finished house and settle in for their

home. H e was allotted a certain number of convict labourers with his grant and with these, quickly cleared the land for his house and cultivation.

Westmacott was an ambitious man. He became acquainted with men like Henry Osborne, James Spearing, John Buckland, Charles Throsby Smith, John Plunkett, landlords of vast acreages, in comparison with which, his 300 acres was like a small paddock. They were men of lordly demesne and their outward demeanour proclaimed them as such. Westmacott brought land north and south of his grant, mainly as investments, but he burnt his fingers, as will be seen later. In 1839 he was instrumental in starting a steamship company as well as a coal mine, proving he was a man of initiative and progress. In the same year he had a visitor in the person of Lady Franklin, wife of the governor of Tasmania, who was making an overland trip from Port Phillip to Sydney. She formed a very high opinion of him. She says, "He is the person, perhaps, we have liked the best on our tour; kind, energetic, sincere and active. He has bought land at 5/- per acre two years ago and can now get £5 and £6 for it. He has adopted this country as his own and is rapidly growing rich."

One could imagine that the main topics of conversation were the steamship company and the coal mine; the former being an established fact and the latter in the process of formation. Had Westmacott kept to his original intention of farming and raising blood stock, he would have achieved the riches Lady Franklin foresaw for him; but no, he must dabble in public affairs and speculative companies with dire results. In 1843, one reads in court files, that his estate was surrendered and placed under sequestration. One thing remains as a monument to his enterprise, the present Bulli Pass. He discovered and surveyed a track that led to the top of the escarpment and which was known as "Westmacott's Pass".

EARLY SETTLERS
1843-1866

James Hicks.

James Hicks must have been one of the original settlers. His grant of 50 acres adjoined two of Westmacott's blocks which he had purchased from O'Brien. These could have been at Woonona. However, when Westmacott's estate at North Bulli, "Sidmouth", was sold in 1843, it was acquired by James Hicks who moved into it with his family.

There were two boys, Henry Thomas and Richard, and some girls. The Hicks farmed the land near the house and founded an orchard on the higher ground towards the

cliffs. James Hicks subdivided the 300 acres he took over from Westmacott into farm and orchard lots of 40 acres bringing families to the area with the sole object of creating farms and orchards. The earliest of these families were the Fords, the Carricks, the Dalys, the Mitchells, the Maddens, and the Hopewells. The Fords grew oranges, the Carricks grapes and apples; the Dalys vegetables and fruit; the Maddens, Mitchells, and Hopewells carried on farming. The lower and flat areas were given to farming, while the orchards extended into the hillsides. By 1860, there were also the Powells and the Geraghtys and the Kennedys, and the McPhees.

The Kennedy Family.

James Kennedy, with his wife and five children, a boy and four girls, came from Yallah and occupied a grant of land made to Joseph Roberts of 160 acres, adjoining Westmacott's grant on the south. The property extended from the sea on the east to the mountains on the west and from Westmacotts on the north to Flannagan's creek on the south. The land had a sloping paddock back from Moore Street and then rose steeply to a high hill which is still called Kennedy's Hill. The house was built on the eastern end of the slope and the remainder carried on as a dairy farm, supplying the district with milk and cream and eggs from their poultry.

In 1867, James, with three others, was elected as a Patron on a Board to establish a school under the National Education Board, at North Bulli, and, after considerable negotiations, was successful in having it started.

On the death of the parents, the farm was run by the son Patsy, and the girls; the latter making the butter as well as helping in the field, sowing corn and cutting the lucerne. They were very retiring people, but kind and generous. Devout Catholics, they were known to walk to Wollongong along the beaches to Mass in the morning and walk back again, eight miles each way. When asked by the priest why he did not get a buggy, Patsy said, "I'd get rheumatism sitting in it." None of them ever married, and Patsy, in his 80s in 1905, was gored by a bull and killed, leaving the girls to handle their affairs, but, being totally unfitted for such a charge, the church had to come to their aid, and Father Dunne of the Bulli Charge, and Mr. Morton, manager of the Excelsior Mine, took over the control of the estate. It was found that the deeds of the property had never been transferred and were still in the father's name, causing much delay in the finalising of the affairs of the estate. The property was sold for £3000 and the girls provided for in Thirroul. The subdivision of the land and the sale next year created quite a stir in the real

estate world. Slade and Brown of Sydney, bought the property, advertised free rail tickets to Austinmer on the day of the sale, attracting hundreds of people and selling 70 of the 112 blocks offered. It was a notable day for Austinmer, the commencement of a tourist district that developed into a fashionable seaside and health resort. The Kennedys had been there for 65 years.

Reverting to the 60s, one can easily imagine what effect the passing of the years had on the families. All had numerous children and by that time marriages between them would be plentiful. Looking through the list that has been supplied to me, it would entail pages of printing to detail all of them, but, no doubt, descendants still live in the district who know their relation to these early settlers.

STARTING THE SCHOOL

By 1866, there were 35 to 40 children in the district of school age. The fact that no school existed to educate them was a matter of grave concern amongst the parents. As well, a mine had been opened and a saw mill established at Bulli, about two miles distant, and where more children were not receiving education.

At a public meeting held at North Bulli, it was decided to apply to the National Board of Education for the establishment of a school at North Bulli, elect a Board of Patrons, erect a school house, and appoint a teacher. Accordingly four men were elected, namely Charles Powell, James Hicks, C. Geraghty, and Donald McPhee. Mr. J. Hicks granted a site of one acre and built a suitable building 20' x 12' for a school, and a teacher. Mr. W. F. King was appointed, commencing on 4th June, 1866. During the year of 1866 the Public School Act changed the system of education and on the 30th June of that year, an application was made to transfer from the National System to the Public School System, which was granted on 6th April, 1867.

The Centenary of which is hereby incorporated.

CENTENARY OF AUSTINMER PUBLIC SCHOOL

1867 to 1967

EARLY SCHOOLING

Up to 1848, the only schools recognised by the government were the church schools, and up to 1838 the only church recognised was the Church of England.

From 1838, denominational schools were recognised and government assisted. A Roman Catholic school was started in Wollongong in 1838, and a Presbyterian school was opened in Jamberoo in 1842, and a number of private schools sprang up in the Illawarra, particularly in the 50s.

Prior to this and before the first national school was established, education in N.S.W. was under the control of the Trustees for the Church and School Lands. This worked out so badly that Governor Bourke (1832-1837) and his council took matters out of their hands and decided to establish a National System of Education, based on the system then existing in Ireland. To this the churches strongly objected, sending protests from all parts of N.S.W. One strongly worded petition from Wollongong, signed by the Rev. M. D. Meares, and 126 parishioners, was sent to the Council expressing:

> "Great alarm and dissatisfaction about the proposal of the N.S.W. Council to establish a system of education which will either abolish that which has existed in this colony since its foundation or will impose upon your petitioners a charge for the support of which they are not able to afford."

However, the Council went on with its project, but, owing to the protests, the National School System was not introduced into N.S.W. until 1848. When the system was introduced, Patrons were appointed in each district to organise the movement and to give the teachers as much help and encouragement as they could. They had also to induce the residents to provide a school building and pay one third of the cost and had also to arrange for a supply of teachers.

Side by side with National Schools were the denominational schools which also received government aid.

The National Schools became the Public Schools at the beginning of 1867. The Act transferring them passed Parliament in 1866. When the Education Bill was before Parliament, meetings were held at Wollongong and Dapto, attended by representatives of both National and Denom-

inational schools. They urged compulsory attendance between seven and 13 years of age, and that schools should be non-sectarian, but one hour a day school be set apart for religious instruction by clergymen; inspectors to be appointed only from among teachers; the minimum salary to be £150 per annum.

The transition did not make much difference in the systems. The same readers and scripture books were used. Schools still had the same long desks, the same slates and pencils — most unhygienic — the same school fees and the same inadequate provision of light and air, the same long school rooms where three, four and five classes were taught side by side, one teached competing with another while giving lessons. It is wonderful that under such circumstances such excellent work was done in so many cases.

Some outstanding examples were Sir William Cullen, Sir George Fuller, Sir Joseph Carruthers and Sir Denison Miller, all from the coastal area.

In 1880, State aid was withdrawn from denominational schools, the charge of 6d. per week was reduced to 3d. and eventually abolished.

THE STORY OF THE NORTH BULLI PUBLIC SCHOOL — 1867 - 1895

renamed

Austinmer Public School — 1895 - 1967

By N. S. King

This story, being published in conjunction with the "Centenary of Austinmer Public School" incorporates extracts taken from the "Historical Account of Austinmer School" prepared by the Division of Research and Planning, Department of Education of New South Wales.

The Department's account visualises a 'Private School' as the first school established at North Bulli. My researches indicate a school under the National System of Education which was in operation until 1866, when an Act of Parliament known as the Public School Act, was passed, as stated previously.

A Local Board of Patrons had been elected, a school built, a teacher appointed and billeted and teaching materials obtained in accordance with National School requirements.

My conclusions are based on researches into the Archives of the Mitchell Library and the facilities of the Public Library, and I have followed the "Foreword" "Early Schooling" with my version and then given the Department's account of their opening.

With the transition of the National System of Education to the Public School System in N.S.W. in the year 1866, many of the schools operating under the former system, applied to to be transferred to the Public School System and where districts were unprovided with the means of having their children educated, applied for a school to be established.

Among the former was the National School established at North Bulli. This was a rural district of farmers, orchardists, dairymen and vineyardists who had been established for many years. They had elected a Board of Patrons of four, to comply with the National Board's requirements, namely, Charles Powell, James Hicks, C. Geraghty and Donald McPhee, provided and furnished a school house and appointed a teacher in the person of F. W. King, a trainee at the Worcester Diocesan Training

College, Salsley, England. The school had been established a few months when the Public School Act was passed and the Local Board decided that it would apply to have the school transferred to the Public School System. A new Board, the Public School Board, was elected early in March 1867, and an application was made on 8th March, 1867 to have the new Board approved by the Council of Education, as follows:

The Secretary,
Council of Education.

Nth. Bulli,
8th March, 1867.

Sir,

In accordance with the Public School Act of 1866, Clause 22, I beg to submit for your approval the names of the following gentlemen who have been elected by general consent, to act in the capacity of a Local Public School Board for the school at North Bulli and who have given consent to act as a Public School Board for the Public School here if approved by the Council of Education.

Name	Residence	Denomination
Mr. James Kennedy	Nth. Bulli	R.C.
Mr. James Hicks	Nth. Bulli	C. of E.
Mr. Charles Powell	Nth. Bulli	Wes.
Mr. Donald McPhee	Nth. Bulli	Pres.

I am,

Your Obedient Servant,

JAMES HICKS.

Prior to this application, on June 30th, 1866, Mr. King wrote to the Secretary of the Council of Education, W. Wilkins, as follows:

"Your name, being the only one with which I am acquainted as being in connexion [*sic*] with the National Education Board, I have taken the liberty of writing to you for a copy of the rules to be observed, in bringing a school under the control of the National Board. In this district a school-house has been erected, and duties carried on for this last six months, with an average attendance of 30 scholars, and it is the desire of the residents at large to bring it under the control of the National Board as soon as possible. For this purpose we want a copy of

the aforementioned rules, that we may set about this, conformably with the same. No doubt Sir, what I am now asking is beyond your department, but if you would make this case an exception and cause a copy of the rules to be forwarded, you would confer a very great favour."

Mr. King was applying for rules of procedure for transferring their National School to a Public School for on 27th October, 1866, the Board of Patrons made a formal application for the establishment of a Public School.

Following Hicks' letter of 8th March, 1867, notifying the Board of the election of a Public School Board, Mr. King, on the 17th of the same month, sent this letter:

To the Secretary, Council of Education, SYDNEY. Dear Sir, In forwarding the "Abstract of Salary" and being uncertain as to what rate of salary you will be pleased to award me, I beg, most respectfully through the medium of the Local Board, to call your attention to the following facts: 1. That I have conducted this school to the satisfaction of the Local Board since June 4th, 1866, during which time I have received no salary whatever, altho' a quarterly return for quarter ending December 29th, 1866, was forwarded to the LATE National Board.

He states his training and forwards a testimonial. TO THIS LETTER A MEMO WAS ATTACHED BY THE SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION, MR. WILKINS, TO THE SENIOR INSPECTOR, T. GARDINER, "FOR YOUR REPORT. I FEAR THIS SCHOOL HAS BEEN OMITTED FROM THE LIST, NO SALARY HAVING YET BEEN PAID TO THE TEACHER".

This was immediately rectified by the newly formed Council of Education, proving that it was a departmental school. However it started to operate as a Public School on 6th April, 1867, for according to the "Government Gazette", Vol. 1, pp. 912, His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, directs it to be notified for general information, that in accordance with the 22nd section of the Public Schools Act of 1866, the undermentioned gentlemen have been appointed to form the Local School Board at Nth. Bulli, naming the four gentlemen before mentioned. It is from that date that it operated as a Public School.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S ACCOUNT OF THE STARTING OF THE NORTH BULLI PUBLIC SCHOOL

1867 to 1875

The first move towards the establishment of a public school at Austinmer, then known by the name of North Bulli, was made on 30th June, 1866. The teacher of a private school operating in the village, Mr. Frederick King, wrote to the Secretary of the Board of National Education Mr. William Wilkins, as follows:

"Your name being the only one with which I am acquainted as being in connexion [*sic*] with the 'National Educational Board' I have taken the liberty of writing to you for a copy of the Rules to be observed, in bringing a school under the control of the 'National Board'. In this district a school-house has been erected, and duties carried on for this last six weeks, with an average attendance of 30 scholars and it is the desire of the residents at large to bring it under the control of the 'National Board' as soon as possible. For this purpose we want a copy of the aforementioned rules, that we may set about this, conformably with the same. No doubt Sir, what I now am asking is beyond your department but if you would make this case an exception, and cause a copy of the Rules to be forwarded, you would confer a very great favour."

The necessary forms were subsequently forwarded to Mr. King and on 27th October, 1866, a formal application for the establishment of a *public* school was made by Messrs. Charles Powell, James Hicks, G. Geraghty and Donald McPhee. It was stated that a school was already in operation with an enrolment of seventeen boys and sixteen girls. Mr. Frederick King was the teacher. Classes were being conducted in a wooden one-room building, measuring 12 feet by 20 feet, which was owned by Mr. James Hicks. Although the school was progressing satisfactorily, the residents wished to see it aligned with the Board of National Education and urged that the school be established as soon as possible.

Before the Board could make a decision on the matter, however, the following letter was received from the Secretary of the Local Board, Mr. Henry Hicks, pointing out

further reasons why the school should be established. He wrote:

". . . . I beg most respectfully to call your attention to the following facts:

"1st That the need of a school in this district may be inferred from the fact that it was erected and has been maintain for a period of nearly six months at the expense of the inhabitants of the said district who are for the most part 'Free Selectors' involving upon themselves an expense which clearly proves that there is not a school within available distance.

"2nd That it is centrally situated as its site was fixed by general consent at a public meeting held for that purpose and is attended by children from a distance of not less than 2½ miles either way.

"3rd That 'Local Patrons' can vouch that it will be a permanent affair and far from deteriorating in point of numbers continually increasing.

"4th That should a school fail to be established in this particular locality at least a dozen families will be wholly deprived of available means of education.

"5th That upon careful consideration of the practical working of the school the 'Local Patrons' can conscientionsly recommend it as in all points meeeting the necessity of the neighbourhood.

"6th It has been conducted on a plan strictly national avoiding anything of a sectarian nature, the teacher confining himself to the text of the Irish National School Books and is controlled by a 'Local Board' representing the four chief religious denominations elected by the inhabitants at large and taught by a teacher who has given every satisfaction in points of efficiency and character and who will without doubt satisfy the requirements of the Board.

"Should the Commissioners of National Education not feel inclined to recognise our school and grant a salary to the teacher we trust that they will at least make us a grant of books so much needed, and any further advice upon the subject would be most thankfully received."

As a result of this letter and the previous formal application, Mr. Senior Inspector Gardiner was sent to investigate the possibility of establishing a school. His report of 20th November is given below:

"My information is not detailed enough to enable me to give a complete report upon this application, as the movement is not quite similar to that initiated some time

ago by the Messrs. Sommerville, and in reference to which I collected full data. The present school includes a population farther north — as well as some of the former applicants; and the property has a different ownership. The proposed school however is situated at least seven miles from a National school, and four miles to the northward of the Episcopal school at Wonoona. I am aware of no public school within three miles. The people, for whose benefit it is intended, live chiefly north of the Bulli Pass — and from the last appearance presented by the cleared district facing the ocean. I see no reason to doubt that the minimum number of thirty can be sustained.

"2. The building is tolerably accessible, is erected of slabs, and stands on an acre of ground adjacent to the high road, but is not enclosed. It is owned by Mr. Hicks Senior, and as far as I can ascertain, the Patrons have full control over it. It is newly built.

"3. Mr. King, the teacher, is unmarried. He was formerly a Pupil Teacher in the Shoreditch School — Brentwood-Essex, and is described as having given satisfaction to his employers. He has also a flattering recommendation from Mr. W. Johnston of Clarence Town. I cannot discover that he has been previously teaching in the Colony; and of his abilities, personally I know nothing.

4. The Instruction will be the same as in Vested National Schools; the teacher is aware that he will have to submit to examination; and the Patrons engage to conform to the Regulations of the Board.

"5. Two things are quite clear as regards this matter — namely — on account of the comparatively isolated character of the locality, there is sufficient encouragement for the establishment of a National School; and from its position, it can in no way interfere with the Wonoona Denominational School. I do not therefore apprehend that there can be any difficulty in extending aid provisionally."

The Inspector's recommendation was approved and aid granted to the proposed National School. From this date onwards some confusion arises in the records, but on 17th March, 1867, the teacher, Mr. King, reported that he had not yet received any salary. This was immediately rectified by the newly formed Council of Education and North Bulli commenced to operate as a Public School either towards the end of March or the beginning of April, 1867. (End of Department of Education's account).

Now that the school was firmly established the next move was to have the school house enlarged, 35 to 40 pupils were enrolled and the building was only 20 by 12 feet. It

had been built by Mr. J. Hicks on land he owned, and furnished by the North Bulli people, without any assistance from the Council.

On 18th October, 1867, an application for assistance to enlarge the building was made. James Hicks offered to give an acre of land, the present building and furniture to be handed over to the Department. Inspector Huffer reported that the application should be granted. The site was central and suitable but the ground should not be less than two acres. J. Hicks rose to the occasion and offered two acres at £15 per acre. On November 9th the Council accepted the offer and on the 16th called for a description of the land so that a conveyance could be prepared. Inspector Huffer suggested that Mr. Hicks employ a surveyor or Mr. King if thought preferable.

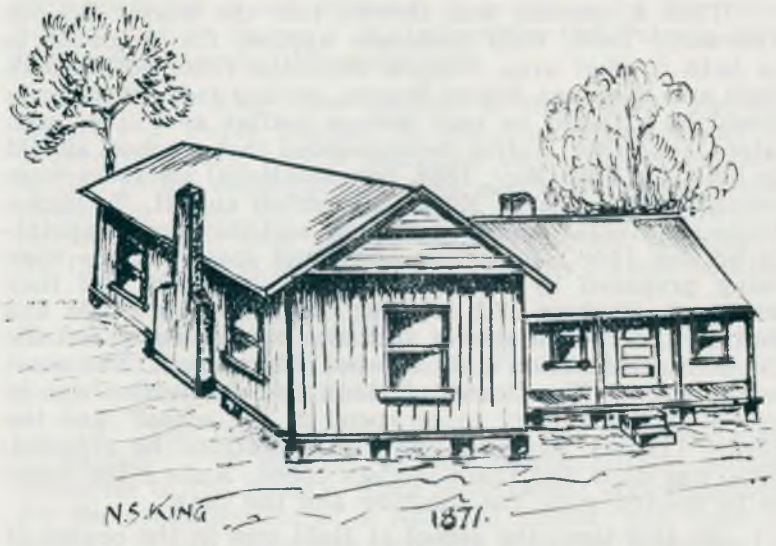
Then a spanner was thrown into the works. On 5th February, 1868, Bulli residents applied for a school to be built in that area. Despite objection from both North Bulli and Woonona School Boards, stating that attendances would be affected (a very serious matter as will be seen later), Inspector Huffer recommended that a school should be built. On 30th May, 1868, two additional members were elected to the Board, Messrs. Goodrich and H. T. Hicks. Inspector Huffer approved of them and they were appointed on 3rd June. Meanwhile plans and specifications were being prepared by the Department's architect and they were submitted on 27th October. Tenders were called and that of S. E. Blomfield for £212 was recommended but the Council of Education quibbled about the amount. The exact words were: "The Council decided that the tender was in excess of the amount to be spent on the school" and the Board (Local) requested certain alterations be effected. This was done and fresh tenders called. Among the items to be deleted were the spouting and the tank.

By this time, the school at Bulli was in the course of construction and the North Bulli people envisaged a considerable diminution of pupils and, as they were liable for one third of the cost of a building, held a meeting and drafted a petition requesting prompt action to withdraw the building of a new school at North Bulli. Patrick Kennedy, son of the James Kennedy on the Board, headed a list of 13 petitioners. The Board, however, proceeded with the project and on 19th February, 1869, James Hicks wrote requesting the construction of the school before the winter. On 22nd February the transfer was completed. By his time the attendance at the school dwindled to less than 30 pupils and in accordance with departmental regulations, the salary of the teacher was reduced. So on 28th April F. W. King applied for a promotion to a bigger school. Inspector Huffer recognised King's abilities and

recommended him as being capable of a higher school; so on 3rd September, 1869, he was appointed to Rose Valley School and on the 4th resigned from North Bulli.

On 13th September, Mr. William Woodford was recommended and transferred from East Maitland to North Bulli on a salary of £84 per annum. His first action on reaching his destination was to report that he had lost his cheque and to have it stopped at the bank. It was recovered later.

The fresh tenders for the new school and residence were considered and J. Rawnsley's one of £150 was accepted. With the coming of Mr. Woodford, the Board was informed that the school fees were to be increased to 1/- per week for the first member of the family and 6d for



North Bulli School and Teacher's Residence.

[Drawn from a description in the Mitchell Library.]

any others. This created further animosity towards the Council and a vigorous protest was lodged, which declared that it was beyond the people of the district and was ultimately reduced to 6d for the first two and 3d for any others.

By 12th March, Rawnsley was considered incapable of completing the school buildings and the Board discharged him; it being finished by Richard Hicks for £48.

Saturday, 6th May, was a great day for the small community. The school was to be opened. Inspector Huffer came down by steamer especially to perform the ceremony. After the opening all adjourned to the Headland, where the

Hicks Brothers, in front of whose farm and house it was built, entertained the gathering to a picnic.

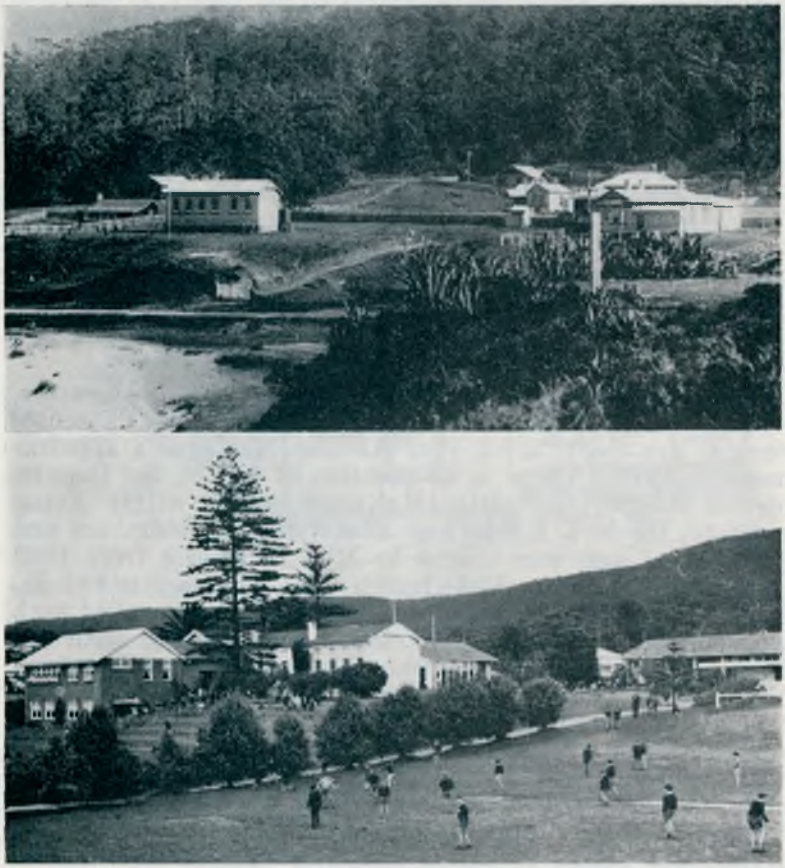
Despite the new building, the attendance was not up to the required number and Mr. Woodford's salary was in danger of being reduced. He had applied for an increase of £12 because he had married; so the two were earning £96 per year. He had twice requested to be transferred, but it was not until December that his pleas bore fruit. The school was closed until 12th February, 1870, when Mr. Alex Campbell was placed in charge. As the number of scholars only numbered less than 20, Alex's salary was in the region of £48, but he received no salary from 12th February to 26th April, but probably it was made up later. He asked leave to get married and it was granted. He claimed £60, but was granted £36 plus £12 for his wife; fortunately there was a house residence.

Alex had to plead for his salary month after month not to be reduced. At the end of the year Mr. Campbell was transferred and the school closed.

A Miss Richardson took over and her salary was fixed at £36, but it came under consideration for it to be reduced. The Inspector wrote: "If this teacher's remuneration really exceeds no more than £36 per year, I think that her case is Pitiable, that the Council should have NO teacher under any circumstances, so miserably paid."

If ever there was a need for a Teachers' Federation, it was then. At Miss Richardson's resignation the school records are vague until Miss Alexina McKenzie's appointment in 1877. There is no mention of her in the Department's History, but Miss McKenzie comes within living memory, for Mrs. E. Morgan, now living at Petersham and 92 years of age, was taught by Miss McKenzie from 1883 to 1885. She had a slight hunch back, but despite her deformity, she was a strict disciplinarian. She travelled each weekend on horseback to Wollongong, boarding with the Hick's family during the week. When she assumed control, North Bulli was a very small community, consisting of farmers and orchardists. However she was there when surveyors and geologists began prospecting for coal for a coal mining company, and to locate a suitable site for a mine. When it was ultimately decided upon and a company formed to mine, miners and mine operators began to arrive and settle, bringing with them families which swelled her classes. The building of the railway also brought workers with their families so that by 1885 the number had increased to such proportions, she was unable to handle them and retired. The number enrolled was 88 with an average attendance of 75. One wonders if her salary was increased in proportion.

Mr. William Cane was appointed to take her place, but he was a sick man and died a few months later. Mr. Law filled his place, evidently relieving Mr. Cane, for the Department does not mention him. Mrs. Morgan states that he was an excellent teacher with possibly a degree. Mr. Andrew Fuller came in 1886 and remained until 1897. Mrs. Fuller acted as sewing mistress. Assistance was granted to Mr. Fuller, Master John Millward being appointed as pupil teacher. He was replaced by Mr. Alec Artis a few months later. Mr. Fuller was high respected and wielded a great



Above: North Bulli School, built 1891, renamed Austinmer 1895

Below: The School in 1967.

influence in the community. In Mrs. Akhurst's recollections she mentions this. Mr. Alec Hamilton, of Dural, remembered him with respect.

Some of the pupils at the school in the period of 1884 to 1890 were:

BOYS — George and Harry Hicks, Charles Powell, Jack and George Green, Jack, Tom and Michael Deegan, and cousins Tom and Mick Deegan, Dick and Dave Howie, Harry Haberley, George, Will and Bertie Green, Will Miller, Sidney and Will Jones, Will Carrick, James Peck, Sam Reid, Ted and Will Medellheim, Will Wonnocott, Alec Hamilton, Pat and Chris Deegan.

GIRLS: Annie Green, Maude Deegan, Maggie and Mary Collins, Agnes Ford, Sarah Miller, Isabell and Rowena Starr, Mary Carick, Lizzie and Maggy Curry, Emily Medellheim, Ida, Annie and Beatrice DeFlon, Ellen and Mary Sweeney, Blanche and Ilse Wonnocott.

A school poem of that period:

Charlie Powell.
Caught a fowl.
Jimmy Peck.
Screwed its neck.
Jimmy Reid
Had a feed.
Sidney Jones.
Picked the bones.

These are the memories of Mrs. Morgan (Ellen Sweeney).

A NEW SCHOOL

In 1891 the old slab school was demolished. From the "Illawarra Mercury", 12th March: "We learn from F. Woodward, M.P., that he is in receipt of a communication from the Department of Public Instruction, acquainting him that an advertisement inviting tenders for the work in connection with the proposed erection of a public school building at North Bulli, had been forwarded for insertion in the local papers. The building is to be of brick, it having been found that the white ant pest is so destructive to wooden buildings, that the Department is averse to erecting structures of that material. The building at North Bulli is so badly infested, fears have been entertained by some of the residents that it will completely collapse and cause a tragedy. There is now a prospect of a superior and more suitable building being provided within a short time."

The school-house and the residence were separated

being about 100 yards apart. The latter was quite commodious, having five rooms, a pantry and kitchen, while the school was one long room, divided by an archway, 24ft. one side of the arch and 15ft. on the other, by 20ft. wide. See Mrs. Glossop's recollections.

The completion of the railway and the removal of the workers brought a reduction in the pupils, so about 1890 the attendance was reduced to half, bringing about the withdrawal of the pupil teacher, no other than Master John Clowes. John Clowes eventually became headmaster of Scarborough school and ultimately a storekeeper in Austinmer, and a Councillor of the Bulli Shire.

The new premises were occupied in January of 1892; the school ground enlarged, and in 1895 the name changed from North Bulli to Austinmer. During that period, the mine worked less and less, strikes and stoppages caused the miners to seek work elsewhere until in 1896 it closed down altogether and Austinmer became a ghost town. The attendance fell almost to zero and in 1899 it was closed for a short period.

The closing of the school aroused the residents to action and families with children, even of kindergarten age, and in nearby Thirroul and Coledale, were induced to send their children to school, bringing about its opening before the year under Mrs. Sarah Carroll.

She remained until 1908 and many old residents remember her. James Walker followed her but only remained for 18 months, when Mr. Jethro Clark was appointed, but he only stayed two years; then Mr. J. C. Grant took over and remained for eight years.

Mr. Grant saw the commencement and the development of Austinmer as a summer resort and assisted the newly formed Progress Association by allowing its meetings to be held on the premises. He was also called upon by the Association to measure and check the calculations of the contractor for the excavation of the rock pool at 8/- per cubic yard. The war period also was one of activity for him.

Alexander Wheatley was the next appointment to last for four years. Miss Burrow (Mrs. Ashcroft) and Miss O'Neil (Mrs. Glossop) worked with him and spoke highly of him.

The school all this time was one large room divided by an arch, testing the teacher's patience when trying to teach. When Mr. Treglawn came in 1924, he quickly had this altered by having a partition installed, separating the two rooms. Mrs. Glossop describes the improvement in her recollections.

And so, over the next 30 years, eight teachers ruled over the operations of the school, each one bringing his

personality to bear upon the people of today who are utilising the knowledge gained from their work.

In 1927 a third brick classroom was added to the two rooms erected in 1891, satisfying the school's accommodation needs for a number of years. A swampy area in the playground was the source of much agitation, but it was eventually reclaimed when retaining walls and fences were

The Girl's Playground.

erected, banks terraced, and grassed, playing areas levelled and extensive drainage work completed.

School population began to increase in the post war years. Between 1952 and 1962 it increased from 160 to 260 and in 1966 reached 295.

Accommodation difficulties were experienced in 1958, four of the five teachers having classes of 50 to 58 pupils. To overcome this, a modern classroom block of three infant classes, a new toilet and shelter block, headmaster's office, storeroom, septic system, and concrete paving for an assembly area, were provided.

THE BATTLE FOR THE CANTEEN

At this time the provision of a school canteen had been anticipated, and an area on the western boundary had been left unpaved for this purpose. However, in July, 1959, the P. and C. Association was informed that the canteen would be placed elsewhere. This led to a dispute between the Minister for Education and the school P. and C. Association, a dispute that was to be given State-wide publicity.

Newspapers of 15th July, 1959, reported that the P. and C. Association "believed the location had been changed because it would have impeded the view of a householder living near the school". (S.C. Advertiser.)

Following a threat by the P. and C. Association to boycott the school, the Association was advised on 9th August of the Minister's instruction that it be disbanded.

Two days later newspapers reported the Minister as saying that the letter disbanding the Association had been sent prematurely owing to a misunderstanding in his Department.

On 17th August the instruction was withdrawn and the P. and C. Association was permitted to operate again. The issue was further complicated by the statement of a Sydney newspaper that it had been given a photographed copy of a document in the Education Department over a signature which the Minister could not identify as his own and this document directed the disbanding of Austinmer P. and C. Association.

This was followed by the temporary suspension of a Sydney officer of the Department of Education and a Public Service Board enquiry into the leakage of information to a newspaper.

Tho' the files on the "tuckshop" storm have not been released, the school now has a modern well-equipped canteen on an agreed site, staffed five days a week by voluntary workers.

In 1963, an additional classroom, library, Principal's office and waiting room in brick veneer were provided, playing areas further improved and a concrete parking area provided.

Future extension is being provided for by the purchase of "Tor Garda" adjoining the school ground on the south.

LIST OF PRINCIPAL TEACHERS

Name	*Date Appointed*
Frederick W. King	30/6/1866 National School 6/4/1867 Public School
William Woodford	13/9/1869
Alexander Campbell	27/1/1872
Miss Deborah Richardson	/1/1873
Unknown or Closed	1875 to 1877
Miss Alexina McKenzie	/10/1877
William Cane	31/12/1885
Andrew Fuller	28/9/1886
William G. Masters	16/4/1897
Mrs. Sarah Carroll	8/12/1899
James Walker	27/8/1908
Jethro Clark	1/2/1910
J. C. Grant	29/7/1912
Alexander Wheatley	21/5/1920
John Treglawn	26/6/1924
W. W. Newell and Alison Fairley, relieving	
Arthur Davey	8/12/1932
George Yates	12/12/1935
Stanley Buttsworth	3/2/1948
Donald D'Alton	31/1/1950
John P. Jones	6/2/1953
Horace Ford	1/2/1955

The additions during Mr. Ford's regime of a library, Principal's office, waiting room and extra classroom, together with improvements of the playing areas, has made Austinmer school one of the most up-to-date in its area.

RECOLLECTIONS

MRS. E. MORGAN (Ellen Sweeney)
Now living in Petersham at the age of 92.

Ellen attended the North Bulli School in 1883 at the age of seven years, school starting time of those days. The school at that period was the old slab wooden one built in 1869-70, with a fireplace on the southern side and the doorway on the western end and four windows.

Miss Alexina McKenzie was the Mistress in charge until 1885. She was a slight hunchback, but despite her deformity, she was a strict disciplinarian and the whip she wielded was responsible for the order she maintained. If any of the boys merited punishment, she would hold them and apply the whip to their legs and buttocks.

One boy, Mudgee Evans, took violent exception to this

treatment on one occasion and kicked her on the shin, tore himself clear and bolted for his life never to return. At the time the railway was being constructed and some of the navvies were a pretty rough crew and their boys were cast in the same mould.

When Miss McKenzie left, Mr. Wm. Cane was appointed but he was a sick man and died after a few months. Mr. Law filled the gap until Mr. Andrew Fuller took charge. Mr. Law was a good teacher. He was only a young man, a university student, I think. He was able to impart his knowledge so clearly that you could understand it and remember it. Actually he was only relieving until a headmaster was appointed. He told my mother that he considered I was a very smart pupil. The Department makes no mention of him in their records.

Mr. Andrew Fuller came in 1886. I was a pupil of his for two years when I went to the Convent at Bulli. Mr. Fuller would never cane a girl, but stood them in the fireplace. Many times I've counted the bricks in the back of it.

[Mrs. Morgan supplied the names of the pupils at the school in 1888, from memory.]

MR. ALEXANDER HAMILTON

He wrote:

I was very interested in your letter recalling some of the incidents of old North Bulli School. I can only remember Andrew Fuller, the headmaster of those days. I think it was only a one-teacher school as I cannot remember any pupil teachers. (A pupil teacher came after he went to Thirroul School.)

George and Harry Green were scholars; I think Matt Green was their father. I was very pally with the Green boys, when they lived at North Bulli. I also knew the Jones family. Sid Jones was the mine manager's son. He was a boy we all looked up to. Mr. Jones organised a rescue party to go into the mine when the great explosion took place at Bulli, which I remember quite well. A total of 81 miners lost their lives.

Another incident I remember was the wreck of the collier "Waratah". We were in school when it happened and had a thrilling time watching the men being rescued from the ship.

(See Wreck of the "Waratah", page 31).

An uncle, Jack Hamilton, a one time Cambridge pupil, but who ran away to sea at 13 years of age, and who later was mixed up in the Maori War, lived with us and taught me maths, and other tricks of navigation. He was keen on education and when the population increased he decided

that it would be better if I was drafted into the Robinsvale School (Thirroul), so I became a pupil there.

The 90s hit everyone. My father, a farmer, decided he had had enough of labour troubles, packed up and we all went to Bathurst. We were in the coast area for about four years; happy days for kids, but tough for parents. The years that followed were poverty-stricken.

MRS. ACKHURST (Gertrude Webb)

Living in Thirroul, at 80 years of age

Although Gertrude lived in Thirroul, she was sent to the North Bulli School because her father knew Mr. Fuller, the headmaster, and thought that he would impart goodness as well as knowledge. Every morning, at the commencement of the school day, all the pupils had to repeat the "Golden Rule": 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. "I've never forgotten it", Mrs. Ackhurst says, "and I think it would be a good idea if it were done today." She was seven years of age when she started, which was the age at which children started school in those days.

She remembers Bert Green being at the school when she was there. He became established in Wollongong as a newsagent and bookseller. (The business is still operating in Wollongong.) The year was 1893 when she started and the school had only been built a year before.

It was a nice brick school and was called North Bulli. It was 1895 when it was changed to Austinmer. Mr. Webb was a storekeeper on the Main Road, Thirroul, and supplied many of the folk in the district, amongst whom were the Kennedys of Austinmer. Mrs. Ackhurst remembers the "Dairy on the Hill" and the Kennedy family of four girls and a brother. The girls used to milk the cows, churn the butter, help on the farm sowing the maize and cutting the lucerne, etc., and the brother looked after the cows.

They were the kindliest of people and gave you a warm welcome when you visited them. The chairs were dusted before you sat on them; the best china was brought out and dusted also, although they didn't need it. You were given cream with the cakes and plenty of milk.

Mrs. Ackhurst remembers the tragedy of the brother being gored by a bull and his funeral passing the door.

MRS. A. L. ASHCROFT (Miss A. L. Burrow)

School Teacher — 1920

From the early days of the First World War and through the 1920s the name of Aileen L. Burrow was very well known to the school children of that period. Not only for the enchanting children's stories she wrote and which

were published, but also for the extremely delicately drawn illustrations, phantasmal, one could describe them, that were the outcome of her handiwork.

Even to this day, the mention of her name recalls with pleasure to the middle-aged, the thrill and enjoyment experienced at reading "The Quest of the Crown Jewels", "The Adventures of Melaleuca", "The Magic Shell", "The Little Shepherd", to mention a few of them.

Miss Burrow relates her association with the delights and pleasures of Austinmer, back in 1912, when she and her mother spent a holiday at one of the guest houses, resulting in her mother purchasing a block of land and having a house erected, actually taking possession of it before it was finished. They had come from the New England district where Miss Burrow taught at a private school at Armidale for some time and then at The New England Girls' School, where they were short of teachers. This was in the early days of the First World War at which time the Education Department was seeking teachers.

Returning to Austinmer, she applied for a position as teacher, was interviewed by Mr. McClelland, the Director of Education, then went before the Board, was accepted and directed to report to the Headmaster at Bulli School.

This was a new experience; she had never taught in a public school and being the only other teacher besides the Headmaster, she was left alone with boisterous children. The effect was disastrous, so much so, that the Headmaster arranged for her to be transferred to Thirroul School where there were other teachers. She was there for four years when she was transferred to Austinmer School to assist Mr. Wheatley, teaching 1st and 2nd classes. In 1921 an Arbor Day was held when trees were planted by Austinmer residents. She planted one for her mother, but they were eventually chopped down. She resigned in 1922.

MRS. H. R. GLOSSOP (Miss L. O'Niell)

Miss O'Niell's first impressions of the conditions at Austinmer School in 1922 made her wonder whether children could be taught at all. The building consisted of one large room with an archway in the middle, dividing it into two compartments, the higher classes on one side and the infants and lower classes on the other. Lessons had to be given within the hearing of other classes and when it came to singing or repetition exercises, teaching the classes not so engaged became almost hopeless. Despite it all, they carried on.

In her own words she said, "I thought it was a funny little school, coming from well established schools as I did. You would be teaching here and there was no partition at all, and it was dreadful. You would be trying to teach singing or vice versa and of course the noise would be colossal and you would put up with it. Not like the teachers of today. They don't put up with anything. You would put up with that and didn't think anything of it: but still it was all right. The children were a nice type. Mr. Wheatley, who was the Headmaster, was a gentleman, making my stay very enjoyable.

Mr. Wheatley left soon after my coming to Austinmer. He was at retiring age and was transferred to Hornsby. Mr. Treglown took his place. He very soon took action to have a partition installed and when it became an accomplished fact, the improvement was wonderful and the rooms were extended.

Previously, I used to take the children outside to have a little quiet. There were no sheds; there wasn't anything really. The first shed was built while I was there. Portion of the playground was a swampy quagmire and the P. and C. Association were petitioning to have it filled in and added to the playground.

I joined the P. and C. Association as a teacher and we were agitating for the Department to buy the land fronting Allen Street, so as to make a right of way to bring the children from that street instead of from the main roadway; also where extensions could be made later on, but the Government was not interested and the opportunity lost.

Miss O'Niell came from the North-West of N.S.W. and had been teaching at Mungindi on the Queensland border. She was transferred to Fairy Meadow and from there to Austinmer, where she taught for three years, meeting and making many friends.

Mr. Herbert Glossop of Austinmer was one of them, and when she returned to Moree to teach there, he offered his hand in marriage, the wedding taking place at Moree six months later. In the meantime he had a house built in Wigram Road and Mrs. Glossop came to it as a bride.

Wigram Road in those days was an unmade street, more like a bush track with tree roots and jutting rocks, together with washed out ruts extending across it. A primitive footbridge crossed the creek, preventing vehicles from getting through to Boyce Avenue. Later, of course, the creek was piped and a roadway constructed. There were only three houses, "Olinda" (Gillies), "Tipperary" (Sedgewicks), and "Jollimont" (Hunts).

"After I was married, for many years I was the secretary of the P. and C. Association and president later on,

and we were still petitioning to get the ground filled in and it was finally granted.

When I came down here, Mr. Glossop had his own business and ran it from the family house with an office and a garage, where he kept his materials. Then he opened a shop at Thirroul, then later on went to Wollongong and formed a company, which is now a large concern."

There were two children, William, born 1930 and Anthony 1936. Mr. Glossop died in 1960.

CONTINUATION OF STORY

The discovery of coal and the opening of mines, changed the whole attitude of the people of the Illawarra, where wheat, maize, and potatoes, etc., were grown, and milk, butter and cheese were produced. The mines gradually took over, providing employment for and bringing thousands of new settlers to the district.

By 1870 mines were opened from Wollongong to Bulli and during the 70's, surveyors and geologists were actively engaged prospecting for coal in the North Bulli area. In 1884 a company was formed called the "North Illawarra Coal Co." and started mining operations at North Bulli (Austinmer) and by 1886 was producing coal. During that period, the site of the mine was selected by a Mr. D. Moresby, a colliery manager from Yorkshire, England, and on 18/11/84, the Illawarra Mercury states that the tug "Despatch" was taking soundings off Hick's Point in connection with the jetty intended to be erected there.

A few general remarks concerning this gigantic company will be of interest. Commencing with a capital of £150,000, an amount equal to £1,000,000 today, it absorbed a company which had been floated a few years earlier for the purpose of mining coal and the land it had acquired at North Bulli, and then proceeded to purchase land north of this area until it owned practically the whole of the area from North Bulli to Otford. The landed property embraced 6000 acres, much of it being the G.W. Allen's estate. Wherever land was available, it was purchased. Eighty acres at North Bulli were purchased at £40 per acre. On the sea coast the company owned all sea frontages (except Coalcliff Co.'s property) from North Bulli to north of Otford Hill (Bald Hill). The Illawarra railway runs through the whole of the property (in all eight miles). 150 acres were resumed for which £26,000 was paid as compensation, so they could easily pay £40 an acre for any they bought. A total of £80,000 was invested in the purchase of its princely property. In the company's operations, tunnelling, machinery, buildings, sawmill, waggons, etc., etc., £40,000 was spent. From the mine, above Asquith Strret, to the

jetty, erected at the north side of Hick's Point is a railway, 4'8½" gauge, one mile in length. In regard to the jetty itself, it is 860 feet in length, the timber used being from the company's property and the planking being sawn at the mill referred to. A new departure was used in its construction, each pile being placed over a strong 3ft. iron bar embedded 3ft. in the rock and iron banded at the base. (The bars can still be seen). Instead of piles, four heavy concrete cylinders, having their foundations deeply laid in the rock, supported the outer end of the jetty. By constructing the jetty themselves, the company saved £30,000. The lowest tender for its construction was £40,000, whereas it cost £10,000, under the supervision of Mr. Walter Kerle, C.E., and only took eight months to construct. It was ready for operation on 1st January, 1887. The mine railway had been in use for some months prior to this employing a powerful locomotive and 50 7-ton waggons. The mine was in full working order at that date.

THE WRECK OF THE WARATAH

Only six months after the jetty went into operation, on June 7th, 1887, an event took place that created great excitement among the populace of North Bulli, lively interest in the district and consternation to the directors of the company. The collier "Waratah" of 550 tons, chartered by the company and under the control of Capt. McCauley, being half loaded (400 tons), was being moved to load the other half, when a southerly buster sprang up (according to one on the spot and still alive) causing her to drag her anchor breaking a mooring rope which fouled the propeller, disabling her and causing her to drift. Nothing could be done for her. The wind increased and she drifted towards the beach passing over a reef of rocks which tore a hole in her side. Attempts were made to tow her off by the "Illaroo", a Bulli tug, but to no avail.

Mrs. Morgan remembers the incident. She says, "There was great excitement, it being in the evening; bells were ringing and flares lighted, everybody waiting for the tug; getting the crew off, by rigging a heavy rope to the shore from the ship and using a coal basket to bring a man and his belongings one at a time until the 14 on board were safely ashore. At low tide she was lying high and dry on the rocks 300 yards north of the jetty. A ramp was run up to the deck and used to clamber aboard."

THE STORY OF THE BOILER

The ship was eventually salvaged and the parts sold, one being the boiler. It was placed on the rocks near the

cliff and sold to four members of the company, headed by Jack Ford, driver of the locomotive, each contributing £5, and buying it for £20. They in turn sold it for £100 with the proviso that they should deliver it. Teams of horses were used, then bullock teams were attached to it, but neither could move it. So there it remains still, to be seen near the site of the old jetty. Unfortunately, scrap-iron merchants started cutting it up with acetylene torches, until stopped by the police. With such an historical background it has become a tourist attraction.

The fishermen's boatsheds along the beach front near the jetty have always been a source of curiosity. Are they used by professional fishermen? When do they go out fishing? Do they sell the fish? These are questions often asked. The boats belong to the local residents who go out when time and conditions allow. Often they bring more than they require and readily dispose of them to their advantage. It's quite an exciting time to watch a boat come romping in before a favouring breeze under sail and the catch later unloaded on the beach when the boat is hauled ashore.

The settlement at that time, was on the flat where the service station is now, opposite the hotel. The mine workshops and sawmill were located there and the stores and boarding houses were in that vicinity. The young farming people left the farms and sought employment on the railway works and with the mines where the pay was much higher. The farm lands also were being taken over by the mining company. Orchardist, J. Powell, son of the School Board Powell, sold his orchard of 80 acres for £40 per acre (£3200), which his father probably bought for £5 per acre; and so the farms gradually disappeared.

THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY

The railway was being constructed between Clifton and Wollongong at the same time as the mine was being brought into operation. Some 300 men were employed at the mine and quite a large number of railway men camped near the settlement. These men had their tents and huts, getting their meals at the boarding houses kept for that purpose. The miners built houses on land owned by the company, paying 1/- per week rent. A large store, conducted by Jeremiah Moriarty and Thomas Wall, and later by W. Wonnocott, supplied the community and the boarding houses with supplies that had to be brought by sea to Wollongong and carted to North Bulli.

Boarding houses were conducted by Michael Deegan and Mrs. Sweeney. Deegan had been blinded at a quarry at Mogo, but his wife and family carried on the business. Thomas Deegan was the uncle and his sister Ethel is the mother of Mr. Rex Conner, the Federal Member for Cunningham. The Sweeney family produced another M.P. in J. T. Sweeney, late Member for Bulli.

Austinmer Railway Station. New Year's Day, 1912.

In June, 1887, the section of the railway from Clifton to Wollongong was opened. This section had been constructed while the tunnels at Helensburgh and Otford were being completed, connecting with Waterfall and Clifton. Until they were finished, coaches ran connecting the two, but the bugbear was the drag uphill at Stanwell Park where the passengers had to alight and walk up. The cliff road was used.

"The day of the opening was a memorable one," writes Mrs. Morgan, who was a girl of 11 at the time. "We rode in open trucks, everybody carrying flags and calling out 'A mile a minute', 'A penny a ride'." Young and old had free rides and there was great excitement.

There was no platform at North Bulli at first, but on October, 1887, the "Illawarra Mercury" stated , "We learn from Mr. Woodward, M.P., that it is definitely settled that

a railway platform will be erected at the North Bulli tank." The name had been changed from North Bulli to Austermere, but Sir John Leckey's estate at Moss Vale was known by the same name, and some confusion arose. So in 1887 the name was changed to Austinmere, linking the name of Henry Austin, one of the three directors on the board of the Illawarra Mining Co. When the platform was built, the name Austinmere was placed on it, leaving the 'E' off. The first station master was Mr. McDonald, but when the mine closed down it came under the control of Thirroul. When you wanted to catch the train, you held up a flag for it to stop, and when you got to Clifton, you got out and bought your ticket. The carriages in those days were called "box carriages"; they were divided by a partition half way up and you could stand up and converse with the passengers in the next compartment. The padding was anything but comfortable.

TRANSFER OF THE SETTLEMENT

With the railway in operation, the building of a platform and the erection of houses for the miners by the company on the western side of the line, the settlement near the jetty was gradually transferred towards the railway. The strip of land leading from the station to the main road was formed into a road with land on each side which was ultimately sold in lots of 33 foot frontages and depths of 100 ft.

The southern side was owned by J. S. Kirton, manager of the Excelsior mine, Thirroul, and it has been stated that he offered the lot to Mr. J. Coffey for £90, but he refused it. Evidently Mr. J. C. Jones bought some of it because when the Church of England proposed to build a church, several blocks were donated by Messrs. Kirton and Jones. The balance was sold by H. F. Cotterell of Bulli, tel. No. 1, as the Austinmer Estate.

By 1888 a hotel, a hall (Centennial), cottage, a butcher's shop, a grocery store, a barber etc., had been established in Moore Street.

The Centennial Hall was built to commemorate the Centenary of the Colony. It was opened by Mr. J. C. Jones, who said that it was a much needed hall and complimented the proprietor for his enterprise. He welcomed the audience to that, the first entertainment in Austinmer. The programme was provided by local talent and fruit was distributed. Mr. Geo. Farley presided at the piano.

"The Illawarra Mercury", 9/1/90, states that work at the mine was greatly reduced, men refused cavilling, the

normal system in use at other mines, but North Bulli mine would not allow it and disputes arose, the men refusing to work under any other conditions except balloting.

The mine became idle and then closed down. J. C. Jones took up the management of Mt. Keira mine. Although attempts were made to reopen it they were never succssful and the mine closed altogether.

Strikes were prevalent in all mines, police and even military being brought in. One amusing incident can be related: One of the Sweeney boys, Ted, a six footer and about 14 stone, was presented with a box of theatrical props, by the mother of the school teacher, Cane. Among these was a policeman's outfit. During the strike, he donned the rig-out and walked up towards a group of the strikers near the hotel. When they saw him coming, they all made themselves scarce by retreating into the pub. He then went back home, changed his clothes and went back to the hotel to be told that a new cop, as big as a house, was on the job and to watch out for him.

Riots broke out when men were brought on the job from Sydney. The miners would meet them at the jetty. The newcomers were unaware a strike was on when signed up and refused to start when made aware of the situation. The police were there to protect the new arrivals, so causing the riots.

A riot at Bulli might be mentioned. Men were landed at the jetty (Bulli) and loaded on to coal trucks. When the engine and trucks reached Bulli crossing of the main road, they were met by the miners and their wives and children. They stood on the rails, one woman lying down on the track. When the police sergeant tried to remove them, they went for him. He drew his revolver and backed towards the engine. It was reversed and the "Blacklegs" were taken back to the ship.

MINERS LEAVE AND MUCH HARDSHIP EXPERIENCED

Much hardship was suffered and as there was no work, three of the Sweeney boys, J. T., Edward and Michael, packed their swags, climbed the rought track up to the cliffs, then up the rope ladder to Sublime Point and set out to seek work on the railway at Lapstone, where the cutting was being made.

They walked all the way, through Appin, Campbelltown and Mulgoa to Penrith, and then to Lapstone, where

they remained several months, but on resumption of work at the mine, they returned.

The mine management was changed on resumption, but it only lasted for a couple of years and closed down. W. Campbell took over from Jones, and then J. Mitchell, but it never recovered fully, work being intermittent. The weather also held up operations. Colliers were unable to berth and coal could not be loaded. Sometimes they would be out there for a week. Everybody would anxiously await the blowing of the whistle, one long blast for work, and three short ones for no work.

Miners left and went to Camp Creek (Helenburgh). Others went to Broken Hill. Austinmer became deserted. The houses built by the company for the miners were sold and removed; two were bought by Mr. Ball who rebuilt them on the main road. Mr. Sharples of the Bulli Hotel also bought two and rebuilt them in Campbell St., Woonona.

Mr. Coffey was in Moore Street. Anthony Cram had a store; also Websters, but when the mine closed they left. Those that remained were the Sweeneys, the Hallidays, the Coffeys, the Roddens. The Cahills came later, and a few others.

At the turn of the century there was very little activity at Austinmer. The railway was a single track; there was a

AUSTINMER IN 1910

The remains of the jetty can be seen and the house back from the street on the left is "Sidmouth" erected in 1887.

siding with a crossing at the Sydney end; gates and a gate-keeper; no hotel, no church, the school closed temporarily. The post office was at the end of the platform and the gate-keeper was the post mistress as well.

She was Miss Mary Owen who married Mr. J. Cahill, the ganger in charge of a section of the line at Austinmer, and who is still alive, living with her family at Austinmer.

Postal communication had been established at North Bulli on 1st May, 1887. The office was near the jetty on land owned by the Coal Company, but a request was made shortly afterwards to move it to Austinmer which was granted.

Anthony Cram's store was selected as the office which was opened on 1st March, 1888. In 1889 Austinmer was prosperous with 300 men working at the mine, but slackness of trade in the next year reduced business so that the store was closed and the post office passed to J. C. Jones, owner of the premises and was then moved to the railway station.

In 1892 it went back to the main street, but in 1897 the post master at Bulli reported that Austinmer was pracically deserted and the post only averaged one letter a day. In 1907 the post office was still operating at the station where an office had been built.

By 1916 the office was again in the main street attached to H. Young's store and conducted by Miss Hurley. Visitors and residents of that period well remember Miss Hurley. You had to call for your main morning and evening. She knew all the people of the district and quickly knew the names of visitors staying for a fortnight or so.

In those days, a letter posted in Sydney in the morning could be collected in the evening a quarter of an hour after the train arrived at 5.15. You would walk into the office and she'd say "No mail for King" or vice-versa. I remember her saying to me one day, "You like music Mr. King," knowing that I was in the music business. "Yes," I said. "Well, here's a band," she said, handing me a rubber band. My reply was, "You're stretching it a bit aren't you Miss Hurley?"

She built brick premises half way down Moore Street where the post office was conducted until 1966, when it was moved to the corner opposite the station.

THE CHURCHES

As I said, at the turn of the century there was no church in Austinmer. About 1902, a Mr. and Mrs. Wallace came, not many years after arriving in Australia from England, to live in Austinmer. Mrs. Wallace, finding that there was no church of any description in the village, set about having services at her home.

Finding that the people of all denominations welcomed and attended the service, she scuggested that they should build a little church. The idea was taken up, subscription lists drawn up, meetings held and with in four or five months, a neat little church had been built and services held weekly instead of once a month. The land was donated (as stated earlier, by J. C. Jones and J. S. Kirton), which was a great help, as was help in fetes, bazaars, and street stalls. Protestants and Catholics worked together to achieve their objective.

One little incident is worth mentioning. Mrs. Wallace, when collecting money to build the little church, met Mr. Patsy Kennedy in the street. Mr. K. was fond of a chat and remarked, "I hear that you are trying to get an Anglican Church in Austinmer (he was an R.C.), but you never will, with the few people here." Mrs. Wallace replied, "Oh yes we will Mr. Kennedy. Please do not discourage me. Of course, at present, it will not be possible to build a large brick church like the R.C.s do, but I feel sure we shall soon be able to build a temporary church suitable for the present and perhaps in years, if Austinmer grows, we will be able to have a large brick one."

Mr. Kennedy then said, "Well, let me know when you start to build and I will give you a subscription," which he did.

And thus started the church known as "All Saints" which has served the Anglican community for over 60 years and though added to, the "Little Church that never would be built", still stands proudly where it was first erected. Clergymen, benefactors, organists, lay preachers, and helpers have come and gone but always the spiritual uplift has been maintained. The present rector, the Rev. R. R. Gibson, Th.L., was inducted on 6th May, 1958.

The Methodist Church held services in the Surf Club-house in 1921 and in the same year, the foundation stone of the neat brick church in Moore Street was laid by Mrs. P. N. Slade, on 3rd December. The building was completed at a cost of £850 and opened on 7th January, 1922, by the Rev. C. J. Prescott. A memorial fence and gates to Flt./Lt. Ivor H. Meggitt, R.A.F., killed in action on 27th December, 1940, were erected in 1956.

"All Saints" C. of E., Austinmer. Erected 1904.

Methodist Church, Austinmer. Erected 1921.

THE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

It took the people of Austinmer seven years after the sale of the land that brought it into prominence as a seaside and health resort to realise that the seafront was in jeopardy of being lost, as the land between the South Coast Road and the high water mark of the beach was held by private owners and could have been sold for building purposes.

Subdivisions were held in 1910, 1913, and 1914, contiguous to the beach, by the company, and, no doubt, it was quite prepared to dispose of this land also. Had this happened Austinmer would have had houses where the promenade and parking area now exist.

Fortunately, it was recognised by some of the residents that this could happen, especially as land was being eagerly sought by visitors for holiday purposes.

A meeting was called for Saturday, 3rd January, 1914, and was held on the beach. Judge F. S. Boyce was elected to the chair and declared the meeting open. Archdeacon Haviland moved and Mr. G. Cram seconded, "That the residents and ratepayers of Austinmer request the Bulli Shire Council to secure, by resumption, as a site for a park and promenade the strip of land facing the foreshores of Austinmer and to levy a special rate on the 1914 valuation upon the local rateable property for the said purpose."

Discussion arose and the meeting was adjourned for discussion to the following Saturday at the same place at 8 p.m.

At this meeting, attended by the President of Bulli Shire, Mr. J. Kirton, and Councillor Cotterill, Mr. P. N. Slade moved an amendment to the motion of Archdeacon Haviland, seconded by Mr. J. Young, "That a deputation be sent to Messrs. Allen & Allen, owners of the land, to make the best arrangements possible for the resumption of the foreshores."

Councillor Kirton, G. Wallace, J. Young, P. W. Slade, J. S. Adam and the chairman, F. C. Boyce, were appointed as a deputation. It was then moved by C. W. Stirling and seconded by R. C. Forsyth and carried, "That this meeting form itself into a Progress Association, with power to add to its number". The following were then elected: President, S. J. Vidler; hon. secretary, E. J. Williams; hon. treasurer, G. Lamb; committee, Messrs. Wicks, D. W. Lett, J. Coffey, W. Halliday, Grant, E. H. Ferguson, A. Scheidler.

It was recognised there was much to do to provide facilities for the ever-increasing number of residents and visitors to the area such as excavating a swimming pool for children, securing additional up-to-date dressing sheds for adults, planting of shade trees, providing seats and at the

suggestion of Judge F. S. Boyce, that a lifesaver be appointed for the beach during the holidays. Action was at once taken to carry out this suggestion, and Mr. A. Clarke, a local man, was appointed at a salary of £3 per week on

Moore Street, Austinmer, 1912.

the 17th January, 1914. Twelve days later it was placed on record that the lifesaver Clarke saved the life of a visitor to the beach.

The appointment of a permanent lifesaver was the first appointment of its kind in N.S.W. To do this the surf club started in 1909 was absorbed by the Progress Association.

A letter from Allen & Allen submitted a subdivision plan of 1330 feet of beach land fronting the main road for £1 per foot.

This was considered too high, and an offer of £500 was made and subsequently paid by the Bulli Shire.

Duplication of the railway line was under consideration at this time and the A.P.A. was very anxious that the platform be lengthened and the new one be built of brick, but despite their efforts it was built of timber. The Government refused to resume the foreshores beyond the point of the old jetty, and the Postal Department refused a postal delivery, "It does not justify the appointment of a letter carrier". A track to Sublime Point was ultimately made leading to a ladder at the cliff-face.

At the first annual meeting, held in the Public School, Judge Edmunds moved that "All the members of the committee be re-elected and thanked for the capable manner in which they carried out their duties." The motion was

carried unanimously. The committee elected was: Presdent, S. J. Vidler; hon. secretary, H. Falconer; hon. treasurer, G. Lamb; Messrs. Cram, Carey, Coffey, Clarke, F. Farey, Garrett, Hobbs, Hawkins, D. M. Lett, J. D. Lett, Langdon, Lawrence, Scheidler, Strachan, and Rev. Dent.

These were the first activities of the Association and these were the type of progressive men offering their services to maintain a high standard of amenities and advance the interests of the community. The A.P.A. with many changes of personnel carried out innumerable projects for the betterment of Austinmer.

THE LIFESAVING CLUB

The first lifesaving club was formed at a meeting held at the "Outlook" Guest House on 20th October, 1909, when Mr. Ainsley, proprietor of the guest house, was elected president, S. Walker, vice-president; F. H. Vernon, hon. secretary; A. J. Hines, hon. treasurer; and J. Luff and G. Wallace, committeemen. Those gentlemen laid the foundation of life saving on Austinmer beach.

In 1914, the newly formed Austinmer Progress Association absorbed the L.S. club to allow it to appoint a permanent lifesaver. The payment of £3 a week and house rent free during the summer season was beyond the resources of the club. Mr. Les Clarke, was appointed and had the honour of being the first permanently employed lifesaver in N.S.W.

Austinmer lifesaving Squad — Champions 1928-1931
L.-R.: Back — J. Cahill (capt.), R. Robson, J. Parkes, G. Ross, D. Warden, V. Cox. Front—W. Redfern, W. Fenton.

The aim of all lifesavers is to pass the exam for the Bronze Medallion and in the next year, 1915, three members travelled to Sydney and successfully passed the Royal Life Society's Medallion. Much enthusiasm was displayed when it was announced and a social evening was arranged to congratulate them and their travelling expenses were generously paid for by Judge Edmunds and Mr. Vidler. Other members stated that they would train for it. This promise was fulfilled for over the period from 1915 to 1962, no less than 213 Bronze Medals have been awarded to Austinmer boys. Added to this 34 have received Instructors' Certificates, and 24 Qualifying Certificates.

A move was made to request the Bulli Shire Council to provide a lifesaver for the Christmas period as the Association had supplied one for two years, but owing to Patriotic Funds, were not able to meet the expense of one. Evidently the Shire Council rejectd the request for at the next committee meeting of the Association, nominations for a lifesaver were called and Mr. N . Strachan was elected. He held the position each year for several years.

The club was reformed and affiliated with the Surf Bathers Association this year and an innovation of two lady beach inspectors to look after the ladies' dressing sheds, was put into operation.

Boys of 10 and 11 at this period, who so eagerly learnt to "shoot" the "curlers" became the champions of Austinmer's "splendid years" from 1922 to 1932. Mr. Jack Cahill became the outstanding member of that period. He was not only a member of the State and Illawarra champions, but was for 17 years Examiner in Chief of the Illawarra Branch of the S.L.S.A. of Australia, and was made a life member of that Association.

Branch trophies won by the club: 1927-1930 — McCauley Cup; 1928 — Dunlop-Perdriau Cup; 1928-1931 — Rathane Cup (5 years point score); 1931-1932 — four junior cups; R. & R. from 1931-41, six seconds and three thirds ; senior open, 1931-32, first, second, third; junior, first.

The outstanding performers were J. Cahill (capt.), J. McGuire, F. Robson, J. Parkes, G. Ross, D. Warden, V. and Bob Mettam. A. Pitman, as president and secretary in the 30's did a grand job.

Austinmer were Illawarra Premiers in 1928, 1929, 1930 and 1931, and championship representatives at State carnivals, coming second in the State championships at Bondi Beach in 1928.

George Luck has been permanent lifesaver at Austinmer since 1960.

THE BOWLING CLUB

PLAY AT AUSTINMER BEGAN ON A PRIVATE GREEN

Although a bowling club had been suggested by the Austinmer Progress Association in 1922 and a site for the green selected on the beach front, it was not until 1930 that action was actually taken to form a club.

Mr. Don Lett, an Austinmer builder, conceived the idea of converting two tennis courts into a bowling green and forming a club.

Meetings were held, a club (limited to 20 members) was formed and Mr. Lett agreed to put down and maintain a four-rink green.

Only 18 members could be mustered, and the first officials were Tom Hope, president; E. McQuiggan, hon. secretary, and Edgar Primrose, Treasurer.

As none of the men had played bowls before, they felt it desirable to get a knowledge of the game and practise while the green was being constructed.

It was decided that when the green was ready, a B Pennant side would be entered in the then South Coast Tablelands Bowling Association.

This meant travelling as far south as Nowra and west to Moss Vale and Camden. Cars in those days were scarce but three could be enlisted for long distances and the required number of players squeezed into them.

By 1930-31, members showed the benefit of their experience, and in 1932-33 won their own section of the B pennants. They next went south and won there; then over to Bowral and won again.

The four skips were T. Hope, D. Lett, H. Clark and R. Ricketts.

Winners of other country zones had to be met in Sydney, where they beat Muswellbrook in the morning and Taree in the afternoon at Petersham, to reach the final.

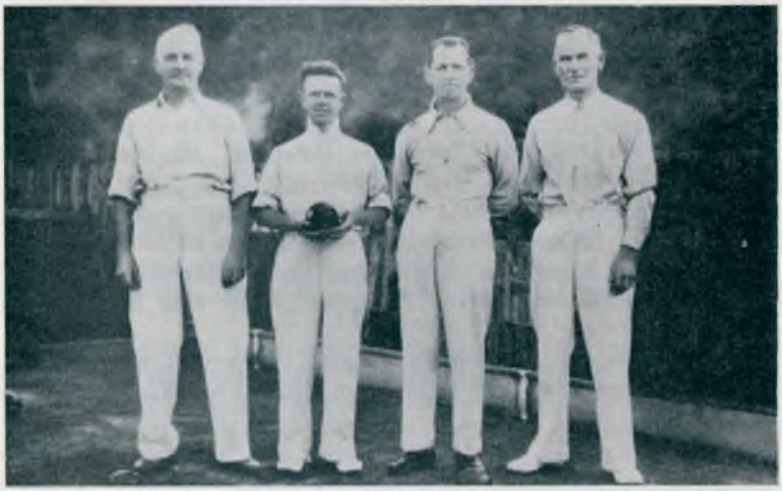
Next day, at North Sydney, Austinmer, amid great excitement, defeated Roseville by one shot, to take the State B Pennant.

During these official matches, Hope's four, which included Ben Heather, Ern Primrose and W. Barnes, did not lose a match. They played 33, won 32, and drew one — surely a record. Hope also won the District Singles Championship.

Following a disagreement with Lett in 1934, the club made an effort to obtain its own green and, at a meeting in the School of Arts, a new club was formed with the name of Austinmer Town Bowling Club.

Hope continued as president with Bill Smarden as secretary and N. Longstaff as treasurer.

Obtaining a site for a green was a problem, but R. Davies, an estate agent and a club member, after considerable bargaining with the Allen Estate people, obtained a block with a frontage of 200 feet, widening to 340 at the rear, for £200.



W. Barnes, T. Hope, E. Primrose, B. Heather, undefeated in B Pennants 1933 to 1935, played 33 matches, won 32, and drew one.

At first glance, the idea of a bowling green on the site seemed fantastic. The old mine railway ran across the land which was covered with blackberries and trees and sloped appreciably towards the back.

By voluntary labour and outside aid, the land was cleared and a wall 4ft. to 6ft. high was erected across the front.

A loan of £600 was arranged with the bank and £100 each from Walter Linton and Mr. Stephens.

A club house was built by voluntary labor with Fred Farey, Doug Gribble and Lionel Black the main workers.

In the middle of 1936 the clubhouse was finished, the first meeting in the rooms was held, and officers for 1936-37 were elected.

Finance was always a problem for the executive and

in 1937, despite its illegality, a "fruit machine" was installed. The first year it returned £600, and ended the financial worries of the club.

The year of 1937-38 saw the club again win the Country B Pennant, beating Newcastle at Petersham; but they were beaten by Victoria Park for State honours. The skips then were T. Hope, B. Heather, R. Clark and R. Young.

The official opening of the club on 5th November, 1939, was performed by State President, Percy Pidgeon.

While T. Hope, B. Heather, H. Clark, R. Young, W. Barnes, R. Davies, were the outstanding players in the late thirties and early forties, those who have stood out over the last 10 years or so are A. E. (Fred) Lewis, A. Tuck, C. Wrench, J. Clark, A. Heather, H. Neal, F. J. Buttel, D. Magee, and D. Nance.

Tom Hope, the club's first life member, was president for 13 years from 1930 to 1942 and again in 1945-46.

Fred Johnson was next to him in service as president, having held the office for six years, and was later made a life member.

Hope is also the club's singles championship record-holder, having won the title from 1930 to 1937 and again in 1947-48.

However, Ben Heather, another life member, can beat his break of 10 years between winning the club singles. Heather won in 1938, 1941 and 1942, and again after a lapse of 13 years in 1955.

John Barnes, a life member, and past president of the Illawarra District, holds the record for long service as secretary, 11 years; this bettered the record of Bill Smardon of seven years. Other life members are R. Davies, W. Ward, L. Black and Harry Mettam.

The fifties saw great progress at the club, a new bar, a greenkeeper's house purchased, a liquor licence obtained, flood lights installed, and in the sixties another green of four rinks and the extension of the entertaining quarters making a vast improvement to the clubhouse.

C. Wrench won the District Championship in 1955-56, A. Lewis in 1959-60, 63-64, and 66-67, and the District Triples with H. Neal and A. Tuck in 1966-67. President, F. T. Galwey has held that position for four years, 1963-67, while J. E. James has been secretary from 1962-67.

THE RED CROSS SOCIETY

With the outbreak of the First World War, the women folk of Austinmer rallied to the cause by holding a meeting at Mrs. Branch's house and forming a Red Cross Society. Mrs. Branch was elected president, Miss Pringle secretary and Mrs. Burrow treasurer.

Work was immediately started on the making of garments, knitting of sox, mittens and mufflers, every woman of the small community taking her part.

Stalls were set up on the beach, funds being accumulated from collections and sale of home-made confections together with fetes and special days.

The Society continued after the war and when the second world war broke out they were geared to take immediate action. Mrs. Way was president, Mrs. Brown secretary, and Mrs. Burrow still treasurer.

Later, a shop was opened on the main road, but, proving too small, a larger one was opened and is still operating in Moore Street, the present executive being Mrs. Rowe, president, Mrs. Bunn, secretary, and Mrs. McQuire, treasurer.

The rostered shop attendants are Misses Mitchell and McCarthy, Mesdames H. Glossop, A. Glossop, Heather, Austin, Magee, Dudeney, and Murphy.

An outstanding Red Cross incident during the war was the picture of the Austinmer-born navy rating, J. A. Mettam, on the poster exhibited in every post office in Australia for the Lady Gowrie Appeal to aid the sick and wounded.

He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Mettam, both of whom are so well known and remembered for their parish church work and Red Cross activities.

AUSTINMER R.S.L. ASSOCIATION

The Austinmer Sub-branch of the Returned Soldiers' Association was formed in April, 1931, the first meeting being held in the garage on the corner of Moore Street and the Main Road. The lack of halls in the district made it necessary to hold meetings in the shed on the beach and in members' homes.

The first president was T. Freeman and then followed J. Tate, G. Fenton, R. Robeson, T. Brooks, F. Cooper, J. McCabe, G. Johnson, R. Munro, J. Summers, D. Timmins, G. Beckett, B. Hibbard, R. Oners, and D. Timmins.

In 1934 the old School of Arts building was purchased giving the club a meeting place and a hall to hold functions.

During the first five years servicemen from Woonona to Clifton were admitted as members. No digger in need was refused assistance and no charity has been turned away. All the men in the local district enlisting for World War II were given gifts of wallets and handkerchiefs and all men returning were welcomed.

At first, the Council refused to allow the club the use of the beach reserve to hold carnivals to raise funds, so they had to be held on private land and vacant allotments, but during the war they were given permission.

In 1953 the old School of Arts was demolished and a new building erected. The building was considered very modern but additions and additional buildings in 1956, 1960 and 1966 have made the club one of the most complete in the Wollongong area.

The year of 1967 sees D. Timmins still president and J. McGuire secretary.

THE LIONS CLUB

Early in 1959 Mr. H. Frew of Austinmer, an old Apexian, in conjunction with Wollongong Lions Club member, D. Longbottom, conceived the idea that a club a club should be formed in Austinmer and with this in mind a meeting was convened, to be held at Mr. Frew's residence in the Grove in April.

The president, Mr. H. Brown, first vice-president, Mr. D. McGuire, and Mr. D. Longbottom, of the Wollongong Club, attended, while those from Austinmer were H. Frew, J. Hopkins, F. Douglas, E. Curtis, B. Husbands, H. Ford, and G. Sorrell, who were addressed by President Brown.

It was decided to hold another meeting at the same address early in May and those present were delegated to interview residents to become members and invite them to the meeting. This meeting was well attended, and it was decided to form a club and that another meeting be held in a fortnight. At this meeting the attendance numbered between 25 and 30 and Mr. H. Frew was elected president, E. Curtis secretary and H. Ford treasurer, the following meeting to be held at Headlands Hotel on 11th June.

At this meeting a board of directors was elected as follows: First vice-president, George Sorrell; second vice-president, Joe Hopkins; third vice-president, Ron Marsh, with Kev. Grew and Ric Turner in the other positions. Meetings were to be held at the same place on alternate Tuesdays instead of Thursdays.

At the meeting on 23rd June, two directors were elected, D. Greenhalgh and D. McKinnon, and at the meeting on 1st September, D. King and J. Douglass were added as directors.

Charter Night was held at the Rex Hotel, Thirroul, on 29th September, 1959. The charter members, besides those mentioned, were G. Adams, G. Bruhn, F. Brown, W. Brown, L. Carlon, T. Elkington, W. Glossop, B. Husbands, C. Matterson Jnr., V. O'Connell, L. Ryan, A. Sharman, J. Stewart, B. Swan, E. Way, H. Wheeler, E. Turner, E. Whittaker and the chairman, V. Lewis.

The presentation was delivered by sponsoring Wollongong's president, Derek McGuire, and accepted by president, Hamie Frew, and the Presentation of the Charter was carried out by the District Governor, Ern Ireland, and accepted by the president.

Among the guests was His Worship the Mayor, Ald. A. Squires, who responded to the toast of "Welcome to the Guests." The greatest gathering of Lions members ever assembled in the Wollongong District came from all parts of the State to attend the Charter Presentation.

Among the many projects carried out, the most outstanding were the Senior Citizens' Centre at Thirroul, the removal and re-erection of a weatherboard house from Moore Street to Hill Street, Austinmer, and the furnishing of it, to be used by aged citizens selected by other clubs.

From 1964 to 1966 assistance has been given to organisations such as Smith Family, United Aborigines' Mission, Bulli Hospital, Spastic Centre, Scouts, Greenacre Workshop, Surf Clubs, International Refugee Appeal, and Royal Blind Society as well as families in distress.

Presidents from 1960: J. Hopkins, A. E. Sharman, K. Rawson, E. Blain, H. Frew, B. Brown; and 1966, K. Marshall, with R. Marsh, R. Ryan and C. Sheppard, vice-presidents.

SIXTY YEARS AGO

At the turn of the century, after the closing of the mine, Austinmer was practically a ghost town. The post master at Bulli had reported that the post only averaged one letter a day and the school for a short period, was closed.

The families left were the Sweeneys, Hallidays, Deegans, Roddens, Kennedys, Cahills, Coffeys, Jones and the Wallaces came later.

The great land sale of 1906 brought an influx of new people and by 1910 many new houses were built and Austinmer was assuming the role of a popular and fashionable seaside resort.

Mrs. Walker (Charlotte Halliday), now living in Thirroul, and nearing 80, remembers such names as Judge White, Judge Backhouse, Judge Boyce, Judge Edmunds, Solicitors Lynton, Stephenson, and Salenger, Captain Young, Captain Blandy, The Hennings, Biddulph, and sisters in "Sidmouth" (very English), the Branch family.

The Henning holding consisted of 13 acres which was subdivided and sold in 1913, forming the delightful "Grove" area, and Hennings Lane.

The old house was used by the lifesavers as a gymnasium until it was purchased by Captain Young, demolished and replaced with a commodious dwelling and named "Rathane".

In 1910 the first subdivision of the Allen Estate forming Allen and Austinmer streets, was sold.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The Cheadle family from Thirroul came in 1911—Mrs. Sweeney (Hilda Cheadle), Austinmer, Mrs. Young (Molly) of Thirroul, and two boys, George and Arthur. Both enlisted in 1914 war and George was killed. Mrs. Cheadle unveiled the War Memorial at the beach. Mrs. Cheadle's brother, Alec Mathers, was the first man to enlist from Austinmer and the 152nd from N.S.W.

Mrs. Sweeney remembers the coming in 1912 of the Letts, Burnetts, Fareys, Careys, Shaws, Greggs (Sir Norman later), Andersons (the David Cup player J. O.), the Larcombes, Dr. Fisher, Gillies, King, Roberts and Pittmans, many of whom still live in Austinmer.

In 1913, the second subdivision of the Allen Estate forming Toxteth Avenue and Wigram Road was sold. In each case practically every lot was sold on the day of the sale, such was the demand for land in the area. Mr. Gillies,

after many refusals by the Council, installed the first septic system. His grandsons, Alan and Don King, sons of the writer, have given devoted service to the welfare of the district. Alan as chief health inspector, and Don as teacher at Austinmer and Bellambi schools.

AUSTINMER TODAY

With a population approaching 3000, Austinmer's confined area of approximately one square mile, has almost reached saturation point.

In the area between the railway line and the foreshores, practically no building land exists. It never developed as a township. The main shopping area of five shops is at the beach.Mr. Chas Matterson conducted the news-agency and served the community for many years. His war-time injuries were very troublesome in later years and when he sold the business, the citizens gave him a function of appreciation that will be remembered for years.

Small shops elsewhere are very few. The township of Thirroul, since the advent of the motor car, supplies the people's needs.

The beach, which is within five minutes' walk from any part, and one hour's drive from Sydney, is extremely popular. Since the building of the promenade, and picnic and parking area, its popularity has become State wide and over the holiday periods crowds of 5000 and more are usual.

Only eight miles from Wollongong, it has become a pleasant residential area and commuters have rail and frequent bus transport when not using their own cars.

Good guest houses and numerous holiday flats and cottages exist, but early application for accommodation is necessary.

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PUPILS ATTENDING AUSTINMER SCHOOL — 1913

Back Row, left to right:

J. Curran, W. Pitman, N. Jones, T. Howard, D. Strachan, J. Sweeney, W. Bradbury.

Second Row:

E. Sweeney, M. Carey, A. Strachan, I. Sweeney, L. Curran, G. Tredell, E. Bradbury, V. Veron.

Third Row:

(Unknown), (Unknown), (Unknown), H. Cheadle, M. Cheadle, N. Howie, N. Hobbs, (Unknown), V. Hobbs, A. Strachan.

Front Row:

A. Pitman, R. Sneider, C. Jones, J. Hobbs, R. Griffiths, D. Jones.

Teacher: Mr. James Grant

Information per A. G. Pitman.

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